

# Coconut Mite

## Recognize the problem

The coconut mite is becoming a predominant pest of coconuts in Bangladesh. The introductions of these mites have caused severe damage to coconut and are a real threat to coconut production and marketing. The mites are microscopic but their damage can be enormous and hundreds of mites can be seen in each infested button and tender nut. One of the visible symptoms of these mites is a brown discoloration noticed in patches on the husk. In case of severe attack, the button sheds, resulting in a very poor setting percentage. In other cases, the nuts are deformed and undersized with poor development of the kernel and husk.

## Background

The mites spread through wind and multiply at a high rate. Initially, it was limited to coastal districts of the country where it is still devastating but now, it has dispersed and become a major pest of coconut all over Bangladesh. Mites are very small pests that live under the perianth so controlling them is very difficult at the field level. The mite population could be reduced considerably following integrated plant protection measures.

## Management

- Clean the crown of the coconut and clean the plantation, remove the infested nuts, burn all immature nuts that have fallen due to mite infestation
- Apply the recommended dosages of fertilizers, in two split doses (April-May and September-October), as per the national recommendation
- Spraying on the bunches:
  1. Neem based pesticides e.g. Bio-neem plus 1 EC or Fytomax 3 EC @2ml / litre of water
  2. Abamectin (e.g. Vertimec 018 EC) or Chlorphenapyr (e.g Intrepid 10 SC) or Propargite (e.g. Omite) @ 1.25ml per 1 litre water, in case of severe infestation.

Spraying should be done 3 times a year - December-February, April-June and September-October, ensuring that the spray fluid falls over the perianth region, especially on button and tender nuts. Care should be taken to harvest mature bunches before spraying.

The smaller mature nut has been damaged by coconut mites. (Photo by Dave Moore/CABI BioScience)



Green nuts damaged by coconut mites. (Photo by Dave Moore/CABI BioScience)



When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > *Aceria guerreronis*

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Bangladesh



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